



# Commissioner's Currents

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Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement, David M. Peters, *Commissioner*  
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Bob Durand, *Secretary*

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## Lt. Governor Swift Announces Protection of 350 Acres in Granby

### *Department Presents First "Partners in Preservation Award" to Fairview Sportsmen's Club*

On a beautiful late October day, Lieutenant Governor Jane Swift announced the protection of 350 acres of conservation land in Granby, expanding the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife's Facing Rock Wildlife Management Area to more than 1,500 acres. At the ceremony, Commissioner David Peters presented the first "Partners in Preservation Award" to the Fairview Sportsmen's Fish & Game Association, which donated a conservation restriction to the department on 190 acres of the club's land.

"Open space protection is a top priority of our Administration," Lt. Governor Swift said. "By preserving the Commonwealth's natural resources, we are not only protecting the environment for future generations but we are preserving the character and charm of our communities."

Secretary of Environmental Affairs Bob Durand also spoke at the ceremony. "The kinds of creative partnerships enabled by the new 'Partners in Preservation' program complement our established land acquisition programs," Secretary Durand said. "This project is truly a model for innovative conservation of our natural resources."

The 190 acres protected by the conservation restriction was enhanced by the department's acquisition of 160 acres adjacent to the Fairview Sportsmen's Club. Lt. Governor Swift presented a ceremonial check of \$390,000 to the Partyka and Zielinski families for this acquisition.

"Protection of this property was made possible by the generous donation of a conservation restriction on the 190 acres owned by the Fairview Sportsmen's Fish & Game Association," said Commissioner Peters. "The department is proud to present the first 'Partners in Preservation Award' to the Fairview Sportsmen's Club for its commitment to protecting their land."



*Lt. Governor Jane Swift speaking at a ceremony in Granby announcing a land protection project that added 350 acres of conservation land to the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife's Facing Rock Wildlife Management Area.*

The Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement started the "Partners in Preservation" program this year as a way of encouraging the donation of land and conservation restrictions, below market rate sales, and partnerships among businesses, non-profits, and the department's habitat protection program. The department purchased the 160-acre Partyka-Zielinski property utilizing open space bond funds authorized by the Legislature and approved by the Cellucci-Swift administration.

The department and its Division of Fisheries & Wildlife have an active land conservation program charged with protecting the most ecologically valuable habitats in Massachusetts. The agency utilizes state open space bond funds and revenue from the Wildlands stamp for its acquisition efforts. The agency spent \$12.3 million and protected a total of 8,953 acres in the past fiscal year.

**Continued, page 3**

## Improving Access is Critical for Recreation and Environmental Stewardship

Soon after I was appointed as Commissioner of the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement by Governor Paul Cellucci two years ago, I decided that improving access to Massachusetts' natural areas would be one of my top priorities. The Cellucci-Swift Administration and Environmental Affairs Secretary Bob Durand have supported this objective and together we have worked hard to protect more quality open space and provide better access to the Commonwealth's wild lands and waterways. The provision of public access is not only important for recreation but it also helps give people a much better understanding and appreciation for our natural world, wildlife, and the importance of protecting our environment.

This issue of *Commissioner's Currents* explains several of the projects that the department is involved with to improve access to our natural resources. The article about the department's land protection project in Granby is an excellent example of how groups can work together for the preservation of open space, benefiting wildlife while improving access to conservation land. The article about the Wareham fish piers highlights another cooperative project designed to improve recreational access to our coastal waters.

But to improve access to Massachusetts' great array of rivers, streams, lakes and coastal waters, people need to know where these resources are located and how they can gain access to them. More than a million residents of the Commonwealth and tourists are involved in popular forms of recreation such as fishing, boating, canoeing and kayak use. That is why I am happy to announce that the department has recently published a new and vastly improved version of the Public Access Board's guide to facilities, entitled *Public Access to the Waters of Massachusetts*. The 150-page, full-color book includes 90 site maps and information about more than 200 state boat, canoe, and fishing access facilities located on the coastal and inland waters of the Commonwealth.

This publication is part of our effort to improve access opportunities and we know it will be a fantastic resource and extremely popular with people who like to fish, boat, canoe, and kayak. In addition to site maps and details about each individual access facility, the guide includes information about sport fish piers, fishing in fresh and marine waters, boating law, rights of access, and all of the department's agencies.

Staff in the Public Access Board, Commissioner's office, and Riverways Programs worked together to produce *Public Access to the Waters of Massachusetts*. Natural



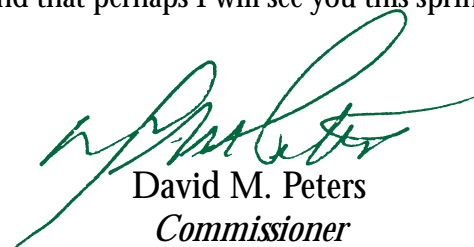
resource information was also provided by each of the department's divisions— the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (MassWildlife), the Division of Marine Fisheries, and the Division of Law Enforcement (Massachusetts Environmental Police). The guide is now available to the public at the Public Access Board's office (1440 Soldier's Field Road, near the intersection of Market Street and Western Avenue in Brighton) for a cost of \$5.00, or by mail including postage and handling at a cost of \$8.00. People who wish to purchase the guide should stop by the Public Access Board office or send a notice of return address and a check or money order payable to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to:



### Public Access Board

Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement  
1440 Soldier's Field Road  
Brighton, MA 02135

We believe that *Public Access to the Waters of Massachusetts* will serve as an important tool for all people who enjoy recreation on Massachusetts' waterways, and that it will also help people better appreciate our natural resources and the significance of protecting our environmental treasures. I hope that many of you will use this guide and that perhaps I will see you this spring "on the water."



David M. Peters  
Commissioner

### Lt. Governor Jane Swift, continued from page 1

The Wildlands stamp is funded by a \$5.00 charge on every fishing, hunting, and sporting license sold in Massachusetts. This sportsmen-funded initiative provides about \$1.5 million each year for the protection of open space. In the past fiscal year, land stamp revenues of \$1.58 million resulted in the protection of more than 2,400 acres statewide. Since 1990, the Wildlands fund has collected more than \$13.5 million and resulted in the acquisition and permanent protection of 17,600 acres in the Commonwealth.

The 1,500-acre Facing Rock Wildlife Management Area (WMA), located in Granby and Ludlow, is also adjacent to 1,250 acres protected by the city of Springfield's watershed district and the 150-acre Ludlow Town Forest. All together, the acquisition creates a corridor of approximately 2,900 acres of protected open space in the region. The Facing Rock WMA is excellent habitat for resident wildlife such as white-tailed deer, black bear, wild turkey, and various songbirds. It is a popular area for outdoor recreation such as hiking, hunting, mountain biking, fishing, bird watching, and cross-country skiing. Visitors will find a few brooks and a pond on the WMA and a beautiful view of the surrounding region from "Facing Rock."

## Help save rare plants and animals on your state tax return!

Massachusetts has approximately 175 species of rare native animals and 250 species of rare plants that the Division's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program considers high priority for census, research, and management. Protection of these species and their habitats will contribute significantly to the preservation of biological diversity in the Commonwealth as a whole.

Massachusetts citizens can save nongame wildlife and endangered species in the Commonwealth by contributing on their STATE income tax forms or by direct donations to:



**NATURAL HERITAGE  
& ENDANGERED  
SPECIES FUND.**



*The department's Public Access Board recently completed construction of a \$375,000 boat access and sport fish pier facility on the Hamilton Reservoir in Holland. Pictured here at the ceremony marking the facility opening are Bruce Bruneau, Project Coordinator of the Massachusetts Office of Disabilities, state Representative Reed Hillman, department Commissioner David Peters, and state Senator Stephen Brewer.*



## New Sport Fishing Piers Built on Wareham River

Salt water anglers in Massachusetts have reason to celebrate since the department has completed construction of two sport fishing piers on the Wareham River at Besse Park in Wareham. The Public Access Board managed construction of the \$175,000 facility, which was paid for with federal funds provided through the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries' Sport Fish Program.

"This facility provides great shore fishing access to part of the Wareham River that is known for exceptional fishing," said Commissioner David Peters. "I would like to thank Senator Murray and Representative Provost for their support of this project, and I would also like to recognize the town of Wareham, the Division of Marine Fisheries, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the state Office of Disabilities, and 'MassHighways' for their help on this project."

The sport fish pier facility includes parking for several vehicles and two 50-foot long handicapped accessible fishing platforms open free of charge to the public. The town of Wareham will oversee the day to day operations of the facility.

"This is a great day for all people in Buzzards Bay who have found it difficult to find good fishing areas along the coast," said state Senator Therese Murray. "The partnership of state agencies, the town of Wareham, and funding from the federal government all contributed to the success of this project."

"I am happy to be here today to celebrate the completion of these sport fishing piers, which are already extremely popular with anglers," said Representative Ruth Provost. "I know that former state representative Charlie Decas and Senator Therese Murray worked to secure the funding for this project and I would like to thank them along with the Public Access Board for providing us with this beautiful facility."

The Wareham River is well known for providing good fishing for a variety of species, including striped bass, bluefish, scup, tautog, and fluke. The access facility was paid for by a reimbursement from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service through the federal Sport Fish Restoration Act, which provides funds from federal taxes on sport fishing equipment and gasoline taxes paid by boaters. The reimbursement came through the state Division of Marine Fisheries, which applied for a grant to the USFWS for the project. The Division of Marine Fisheries' Sport Fish Program has made recreational fishing access to coastal waters a top priority.

The state Public Access Board, which oversees over 200 boat and fishing access facilities in the Commonwealth, managed construction of the project, and the town of Wareham was very helpful through the cooperation of its Town Manager, Office of Disabilities, Department of Public Works, and Harbormaster. MassHighways assisted through the donation of the pile system from the old Route 6 bridge. Other partners in the design and construction of the project include the state Office of Disabilities, Braman Engineering, and Reagan Construction Company.



*Officials at the ribbon cutting ceremony announcing the opening of the Wareham River sport fishing piers at Besse Park in Wareham. Pictured left to right are former state Representative Charlie Decas, Public Access Board Director Jack Sheppard, state Senator Therese Murray, state Representative Ruth Provost, department Commissioner David Peters, and Division of Marine Fisheries Director Paul Diodati.*

## Massachusetts the National Leader in Striped Bass Fishing

By Paul Diodati, Director  
Division of Marine Fisheries

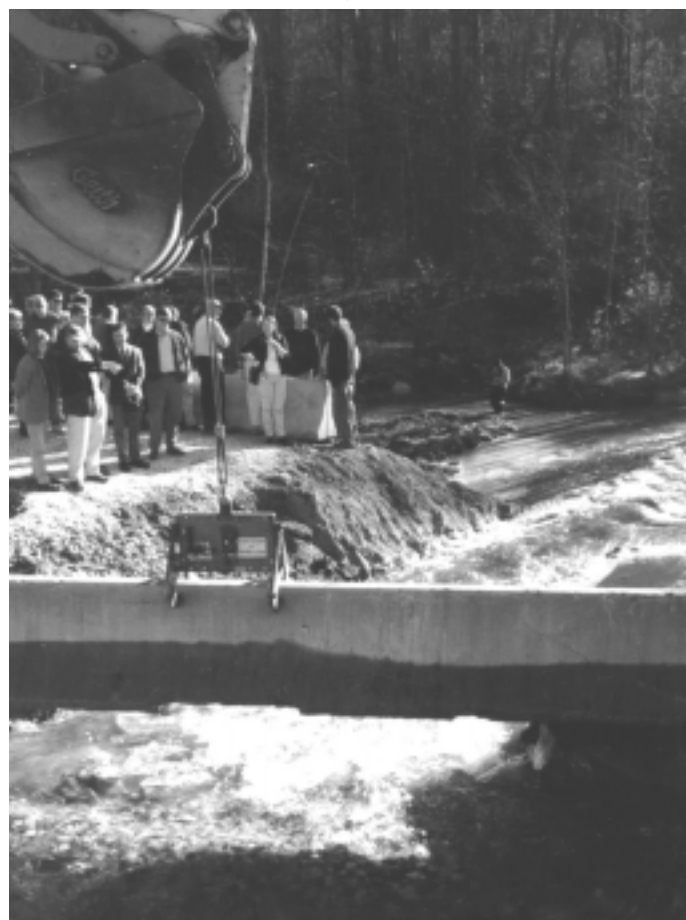
Recently published statistics from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) places the Commonwealth's recreational striped bass fishery squarely on top of the heap of all Atlantic coast striped bass fisheries. Massachusetts' total striper catch exceeded six million fish in 2000 and represents half of the year's Atlantic coast total. The extraordinarily high catch rate can be attributed to a number of factors that combine to make Massachusetts a prime striped bass fishing haven. These factors include having more than 1,500 miles of coastline, a great number of productive bays and estuaries that harbor large food supplies for bass, and having numerous access points to the resource. And of course the most important ingredient, having several hundred thousand men, women and children whom participate in this recreation each year.

Tackle shops, charter and party boats, hotels, restaurants and marinas are just a portion of the industry infrastructure that has expanded over the past decade as a direct result of the huge economic benefits gained from the successful conduct of this fishery. The question of how long the current wave of high abundance of stripers will continue to support this burgeoning industry lingers on the minds of those that are watchful of resource conditions and the actions of regional fishery managers.

The Massachusetts recreational fishery, with a one fish daily limit per angler, is administered conservatively when viewed in context to the regional fishery management plan (FMP) for striped bass, which allows up to two fish per day. Each summer, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Striped Bass Technical Committee releases findings of its annual striped bass stock assessment. Any number of factors could lead to harvest rates that exceed the management targets set by the FMP, which then likely will result in recommendations to reduce fishing effort. If such a situation occurs, the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) will act diligently to protect striped bass stocks and will work to achieve effort reductions that are equitable, effective and sensible from a resource and a fisheries standpoint. Since fishing for striped bass in Massachusetts has become a global phenomena in the 1990s, with nearly half our participants being non-residents, DMF will also seek a management standpoint which considers the coastwide regional use and benefits gained from the resource.

The outlook on future striped bass stock conditions and fishery prospects remains optimistic. The ASMFC Striped Bass Management Board recently approved Addendum V to Amendment 5 to the Interstate Fishery

Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass. Addendum V was initiated in August 2000 in response to the results of the 2000 striped bass stock assessment, which indicated that the 1998 and 1999 estimates of fishing mortality were essentially equal to the targets specified in the plan. Based on the positive results of the 2000 assessment, the states are currently in a position where no reductions in harvest are required during 2001. The new Addendum covers a two-year period, so the Board will have sufficient time to develop Amendment 6 to the FMP to address long-term scientific, management, and policy issues. This timeline calls for implementing Amendment 6 at the beginning of 2003.



*More than 100 people gathered at the Crane and Company headquarters in Dalton on November 3, 2000, to celebrate the first dam removal project under the department's River Restore program. The removal of the Jersey barrier pictured above allowed this section of the East branch of the Housatonic River to flow freely for the first time in almost 200 years. The River Restore program, one of the department's Riverways Programs established by Environmental Affairs Secretary Bob Durand and Commissioner David Peters in 1999, promotes the selective, planned removal of dams to improve fish habitat, remove barriers to fish passage, improve recreational opportunities, and enhance public safety. Congratulations are in order to Crane and Company and all of the agencies involved in making this project successful.*



*Capt. Ray Lennon, Major Phil McMann, Commissioner David Peters, state Senator David Magnani, Massachusetts Environmental Police Sergeant Linda Thomas, and Environmental Affairs Secretary Bob Durand posed after the officials presented the Wildlife Officer of the Year Award to Sgt. Thomas.*

## **Mass. Environmental Police's Linda Thomas Receives Officer of the Year Award**

Sergeant Linda Thomas was honored by the Shikar-Safari Club International as Wildlife Officer of the Year in Massachusetts for the year 2000. Thomas, a Sergeant with the Massachusetts Environmental Police, works in the northeastern region of Massachusetts.

"I would like to congratulate Sergeant Thomas for being chosen by her peers in the Environmental Police agency as Massachusetts' outstanding wildlife officer this year," said Bob Durand, Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. "She has served with distinction in the Hazardous Waste Bureau and recently in the northeast region of Massachusetts, and this award is richly deserved."

"Sergeant Thomas has demonstrated exceptional dedication and professionalism as an environmental police officer for 13 years," said Commissioner David Peters. "We congratulate and thank her for her efforts to protect and serve the public health and environment."

At a ceremony held at the Massachusetts Environmental Police inland headquarters in Westboro, Sgt. Thomas received a pewter plate, a hand-painted certificate, and a commemorative pin provided by the Shikar-Safari Club. State Senator David Magnani also presented a Massachusetts Senate Citation praising Sgt. Thomas for her accomplishments.

The Shikar-Safari Club International was founded in 1952 primarily as a social hunting organization, but members soon began to feel the need to promote conservation efforts. The club now provides funds for wildlife protection efforts around the world, including money for anti-poaching efforts, wildlife research, and awards such as the officer of the year award, given to raise awareness about the important work done by conservation officers.

Also present at the ceremony honoring Sgt. Thomas were Environmental Police Lieutenant Colonel William McKeon, Major Thomas Ricardi, Major Phillip McMann, Captain Ray Lennon, and Lieutenant Frank Fletcher.

"I appreciate all the confidence and support my supervisors have given me," Sgt. Thomas said. "Even though this is an individual award, the people you work with sometimes make you a better person."

The Massachusetts Environmental Police are responsible for enforcing all environmental laws and regulations in the Commonwealth. The Environmental Police enforce a wide range of wildlife protection laws, including recreational fishing, hunting, and trapping regulations. Other important duties include enforcement of environmental laws involving hazardous and solid waste disposal, wetland protection statutes, and commercial fishing.



## Department's Habitat Protection Program Conserves Almost 9,000 Acres in FY2000

The department's Habitat Protection program had a banner year for open space protection, acquiring or obtaining conservation restrictions on 8,953 acres in fiscal year 2000. The total included more than 4,100 acres in the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife's (DFW) Western Wildlife District and about 3,200 acres in the Southeast District.

"The department expended \$12.3 million in funds to protect almost 9,000 acres," said Commissioner David Peters. "The support of the Legislature and the Cellucci-Swift administration was critical, with more than \$10 million in open space bond funds authorized by the Legislature and allotted to the department by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs."

"MassWildlife protected double the amount of acreage we would protect in an average year," reported Bill Minior, DFW Chief of Wildlife Lands. "This was an excellent year thanks largely to two major acquisitions, the 2,500 acre Hull property in the Western District and the 2,416 acre Hawes property in the Southeast District."

The Hull transactions represent the largest amount of Conservation Restriction (CR) acreage acquired by MassWildlife. A CR serves to prevent development, provide for public recreation and allows MassWildlife input on forestry issues while maintaining the land in private ownership. The Hawes transaction, negotiated through the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, is phase one of a three-part plan designed to protect some 8,000 acres of Hawes family land and City of Fall River watershed land in southeastern Massachusetts. MassWildlife, the Department of Environmental Management and The Trustees of Reservations will work cooperatively to acquire the Hawes land in fee and acquire a CR on the City of Fall River parcel.

Open space bond funds and Wildlands Stamp revenue from MassWildlife's sporting license sales provided funding for the land protection effort. The department worked cooperatively with The Trustees of Reservations, Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust, New England Forestry Foundation and The Nature Conservancy during the year. Tim Crane (135 acres), Bill Hull (176 acre CR) and the estate of Martha Deering (155 acres) provided gifts of land to the agency. A grand total 109,278 acres is now owned, managed or administered by MassWildlife in the Commonwealth.



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**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**Argeo Paul Cellucci, Governor**  
**Jane Swift, Lt. Governor**

**Executive Office of Environmental Affairs**  
**Bob Durand, Secretary**



**Department of Fisheries, Wildlife &  
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### Commissioner's Currents

We Want to Hear From You! Send your email address and correspondence to:

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Grafix by Dave Gabriel, Commissioner's Office



Have any questions regarding regulations pertaining to the harvesting of salt water fish species? Call the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries information hotline: **(617) 626-1520**.

**Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement**

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